

THREE
Beautiful and Important PASSAGES

OMITTED BY THE

Translator of *F I N G A L*.

Translated and Restored

By DONALD MACDONALD.

— *Antiquam exquirite matrem.*

By Mr Hall.



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. HINXMAN in *Pater-Noster-Row*. 1762.

[Price Six Pence.]

THE

Beautiful and Important Passages

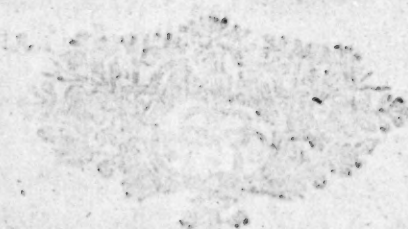
EDITED BY THE

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Translated and Revised

BY DONALD MACDONALD

— with a new edition of the



LONDON:

Printed for J. Mackenzie in Paternoster Row 1861

[Price Six Pence]

THREE

Beautiful and Important Passages, &c.

I.

THE Maid of the Scourge of Fire is come down ; the
Maid that hath spoiled my Fountain of Joy.

My Vestment of pleasant Linen as white as Milk of the
Mountain-Goat, is now, alas ! a Mantle of Sorrow, like the
green Moss on the Heath that covers the Bogs of Death.

Sharp is my Water of Grief, like the Rain that drops
from the Wings of the North.

Terrible is my Up-rising ; like Enemies from an Ambush
rising with Spears ; like the Cord that bends the stubborn
Bow dispatching the Arrows of Fate.

O *Shangger*, Daughter of *Commer-ea*, how deceitful are
thy Kisses ! how dreadful are thy Embraces ! Thy Embraces
are like the Foldings of an Adder collecting her Strength to
dart forth her Fury : thy Kisses are like the great Whirl-
pool of *Malstrom* in the Ocean of *Norway*, sucking Men
into the Gulph of Destruction.

Thy Eyes are like Lights in the Desert ; treacherous
Lights hung out by Robbers to confound the unwary.

Thy Breath is like Mildew from the East ; withering the
Blossom that promised fair Fruit.

Thy

Be that as it will, I have ventured to translate these two Passages, together with the third, which I likewise enclose, and is, if possible, more remarkable than either of the other. If they meet with your Approbation, you have my Consent to publish them to the World. The Ceremony of a *Highland* Coronation may possibly appear ridiculous to People that measure the Greatness of Solemnities by the Riches that are displayed upon those Occasions. Perhaps I might myself have yielded to these Considerations but for a more important one. In *Ossian's* Account of the *Highland* Coronation, it appears that those People believed in a universal Deluge; which is not only a Proof of the uncommon Strength of their natural Parts, too evident to be buried in Oblivion, but is no insignificant Argument against the Opposers of our holy Religion.

The *Highlanders*, like the *Arabians*, are happily placed by their Situation for Speculations of an abstracted Nature. That Conformity between them in their Warmth of Fancy, and the rich Imagery of their Language, is undoubtedly owing to the same physical Cause, the pure and subtile Air they breathe.

The Shells and extraordinary Fossils which the *Highlanders* have discovered in their Mountains, have led that thinking and ingenious People to the just Conclusion of
a uni-

THE PUBLISHER.

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a universal Deluge. Fortified by these Reasons, I dare stand all the false Ridicule of an Age of Levity and Pettulance, if you think proper to send these Translations to the Press. Surely the Ceremonial of a *Highland* Coronation cannot but be interesting, if it is only looked upon with the Eye of an Antiquarian, as an authentic Record of a very curious Matter of Fact.

I am, SIR, &c.

DONALD MACDONALD.

Dec. 19th, 1761.
Gbaring-Crofs.

THE PUBLISHER

a universal Deluge. Fortified by these Reasons, I dare stand all the little Riddles of an Age of Lewy and Prolance, if you think proper to send these Translations to the Press. Surely the Ceremonial of a Highland Coronation cannot but be interesting, if it is not looked upon with the Eye of an Antiquarian, as an authentic Record of a very curious Matter of Fact.

I am, Sir, &c.

DONALD MACDONALD.

Don. 17th. 1761.
Glasgow.

A L E T T E R

T O

The P U B L I S H E R.

S I R,

I Congratulate the World upon a Discovery of the most stupendous Epic Poem that mortal Wit ever produced. Who would have imagined that it could be the Produce of a Country, where for so many Ages there has not appeared publicly the least Glimmering of Genius? Lucky is it for that Country, that this Poem is so much above all modern Composition, as to make it impossible to entertain a Doubt of its Authenticity. I only wish that the Gentlemen who have deserved so greatly of Mankind by their painful Collections of these more than *Homeric* Rhapsodies had been as much above modern Prejudice, they would not then have suppressed, from an unjust Apprehension of Ridicule, the Three finest Passages of the whole Epic Poem: The one is a sublime Description of a Distemper which has been long believed to be a Native of the South; the other is a fine Picture of a Malady which is perhaps as injuriously appropriated to the North.

B 2

Be

Thy Breasts and thy Belly are like *Heclá*, Mountains of
burning Sulphur overspread with Snow.

O ye Chieftains! O ye mighty Men of the Tribes! lay
hold on *Shangger* the Daughter of *Conner-ea*! hide her
Head under the Waters of the Valleys—or cover her with
Stones upon the high Hills! If she goes forth she will scat-
ter Affliction over all the Land.

II.

THE Spirit of the Moon that trembles in the Waters
of *Loman* at Midnight, breaks through the Bars of
Iron in the lofty Tower upon the windy Lake; stealing to
behold my naked Charmer the graceful *Uka*, where she
stands by the crackling Fire of Birch.

From the ancient Box of Unguents her careful Mother
spreads the grey Liniment on her beauteous Limbs, the
smooth Balsam that deadens the Sting of the netley Disease
that comes from the great Western Isle.

From her Bosom of Love to her Waist of Bliss she was
like the sweet-smelling-purple-moor in the Season of ripe
Berries.

The Sloping of her Shoulders and the Rising of her Hips
with the bright Spaces between, were like the gentle Rises
and Falls of the Summer-smiling Sea strewed with the Birds
of the rocky Islands.

The Swellings of Majesty from her Loins downwards,
were like the Arches of Heaven enriched with innumerable
Stars.

Her Legs were like the two Poles of Adamant, on which
the Heavens turn round.

Her

Her Fingers that excelled in the delightful Minstrelsy of the Mountains charm no more ; her skilful Hands are now employed in friendly Visitations to each other, and in making Excursions into all the Mazes of endless Beauty : the Fisherman on the Lake no longer listens to the Melody of the Heart-easing Pipes from the Battlements of the White Tower.

O thou amiable Disease ! thou almost desirable Misfortune ! thou chusest to dwell with the best and bravest of the Sons ! thou visitest the fairest of the Daughters of Men !

Thou communicatest thyself by an Intercourse of kind Offices, and amicable Contact ! thou art transfused by parental Tenderness into the Blood of Children, thou art transmitted by filial Affection into the Breasts of Parents !

The Arm that hangs enamoured on the snowy Neck of *Uka*, and the Hand that grasps her Lover's throbbing—Wrist, convey the subtle Flame ; reciprocate the pleasing Smart, and perpetuate the social Evil !

III.

THE Heroes of Renown came first, cloathed like the Valleys of Summer ; when the Maids run down from the Hills to visit the Golden Daffodil, and to behold the fair Daughter of the King of Fruit ; the rich Blossom of the vinous Sloe.

Their Shoulders were covered with Mantles of three Colours, Purple, Red and Yellow, like the Arch that stretches from the remotest Mountains, over the Plains of the farthest Ocean.

The Purple was given unto the Sons of the Hills as a

B.

Token.

Token of Power and Dominion, and the Red for an everlasting Banner of War.

The Yellow was the Beam of brotherly Love that warms the Child of the fearless Tribes, like the blessed Ray that ripens the Oats in Autumn.

The naked Strength of their Legs and Thighs, and the muscular Glory of their Arms, was like the knotty Limbs of the Mountain-Cedar stripped of its Bark, bent and fashioned for the Boats of strange Waters.

The Iron Voice of their clashing Swords, and the responsive Sound of the Horn of Battles, as they marched slow over the smooth Heath, was like the awful Pauses of Thunder when it bursts from the East, and anon is heard rattling in the South.

They marched by Twenties and one, and the Number of the Heroes of Renown that marched slow over the smooth Heath was Twelve Score and Twelve.

Then followed the glad Tidings of Pipes, and the Maids with the jocund Voice, like the Notes of Love that float on the Western Breeze from the tuneful Groves of the Birds of May.

Their Shoulders were covered with three Colours, Green, White and Black, that betoken the Ages of Woman:

The gay Varnish of Green that laughs with Grace in the Freshness of sprightly Youth: the bright Chastity of the spotless Matron that smiles with Dignity, in the simple Purity of serene Whiteness.

The Winter of Life alas! is marked with Black, because it is then, O Daughter of Clay! that thou art forsaken, and art no more seen in the Meetings of the People.

It

It is then that thou hidest thy inauspicious Head, like the horrid Deeds of a dark Night! for the Tongue of an ancient Woman in the Hall of Gladness, is like the merciless Voice of a Raven calling for Blood.

Their Breasts of chaste Desire beat to the Measures of the harmonious Song, like a Flake of Snow congealed on the spreading Bough of a Fir, moved gently up and down by the tender Sighs of the soft-insinuating Gale of *April*.

Their white Feet stepp'd gracefully-flow over the smooth Heath, their Ivory Arms together waved in the Song of the Praises of Kings.

The Maidens marched by Nines, and the Number of the Maids of the jocund Voice that stepped gracefully-flow over the smooth Heath was Four Score and one.

Then followed the King of the Hills of Winds, reposed in his Chariot of Peace, his Royal Limbs were stretched at Length, as he lay on the fresh-pull'd Fern, like the Sovereign Deer of Ten Thousand Herds, the Ruler of Forests, and Lord of the Fenny Dales.

He was drawn by two impetuous Sons of the resistless Hurricane that scours the Plains of *Shetland*; the Name of the one was *Dun-Farfi*, the Steed of immortal Fame; the other was called *Glander-Roan*, the foaming Horse with the Nostrils of Fire.

Behind the Monarch of Hills within the Chariot of Peace stood the Bard of former Times; on the Top of the Spear exalted on high was the Crown of ancient Kings.

The Blue Bonnet of Power, strung round with the sacred Cord of Cockle-shells, like the Roof of the mossy Cave by the Side of the frosty Sea of *Shapinsba* *.

T 2 O 9

B 2.

At:

* An Island of the *Orkneys*.

At the Circle of Stones, the Heroes of Renown on one Side surrounded the Chariot of Peace; the Maids of the jocund Voice encompassed it on the other; like the Prince of Day when his splendid Courtiers, the Clouds of Noon, are gathered round his effulgent Car.

Thrice clash'd the Iron Swords of the Heroes of Renown, the Horn of Battle answered thrice, the Maids of the jocund Voice repeated thrice the Song of the Praises of Kings.

Thrice on the exalted Spear the Bard of former Times waved the Blue Bonnet of Power, then he spake to the King of the Hills of Blasts, placing the Diadem upon his hallowed Head.

Take, O King, the Blue Bonnet of Power, and take the terrible Spear of the Hills, and be for ever as strong and as secret as Death, for ever as wise and cunning as Time; be thou for ever as refreshing and pleasant as the Pipes that drive away the Damps from the Hearts of thy Children.

And the Pipes played, and the united Voices of all the Hills burst forth together, like the breaking up of the Foundations of the World, when the highest Mountains of the Earth were covered at one single Sweep by the Waters of Devastation.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

IN an original Work like this of *Ossian*, I cannot approve of the Method of illustrating his Beauties by producing similar Passages from the Ancients, and the celebrated Moderns. The Translator ought to consider, that *Virgil* and the *Latin* Poets studied and imitated *Homer*, as *Milton*, *Tasso* and *Ariosto* imitated and studied both. This is a Fact of which I have been assured by Men of Letters; taking the Truth of it for granted, I affirm that any striking Likeness pointed out by the Editor between *Ossian* and other Epic Poets, whose Works he could never have seen, can only create Suspicions in the Mind of the Reader, without being of any real Service to the Original. On the other hand, if there be little or no Similitude in the Parts compared, such an attempt must either look like a vain ostentation of Knowledge, or a piece of Craft to enhance the Value of the Book by increasing its Bulk.

When a Translator happens at the same time to be a Man of Learning and an ingenious Poet, it is difficult for such a one to resist the Temptation of improving upon the Beauties of his Author, and of enjoying the Consciousness of his own Fame in the unenvied Praises bestowed with Profusion upon the Dead.

To speak well of the Dead when our Praises can do them no good, is looked upon by many as a kind of atonement for the Mischief they have done and continue to commit daily by speaking ill of the Living. From this Principle *Ossian* runs no hazard at this time of day, of being defrauded

frauded of his just share of Renown, if his Translator be not vain and imprudent enough to mingle his own Productions with the Original.

For my own part, as I know very little *Latin*, and less *Greek*, and understand no Language perfectly but my native *Ersh*, I can make no Comparisons, if I was disposed, between *Ossian* and the Ancients; and am pretty much in the same Predicament as to the Moderns, having hardly read any thing modern but in *English*, and the few Writers I have read in that Tongue being only a few classical Authors of our own Nation, and those chiefly Historians or political Writers: so that if I am unqualified for being a Critic, I am also in no danger of dressing my Author out, in the rich Purple and Laticlavian Simplicity of the Ancients, or in the Embroidery and figured Velvets of the Moderns.

Tho' the Translator of *Fingal* may have exposed himself to Suspicion, I am far from insinuating that he has given any just grounds for it; on the contrary, I know how superior he has been to the Temptations of Learning and Genius. I can bear witness for him, that his Translation is astonishingly literal throughout; and his Proposal of leaving the original Copy in one of the Universities puts his Candour out of all Dispute, and will I hope induce those learned Bodies to erect new Professorships both for the *Ersh* Language and *Ersh* Poetry.

The mortifying Confession which I have made of my Ignorance and want of Erudition, will it is to be hoped persuade the Reader, that *Ossian* has suffered lamentably by his illiterate Translator. I should not have attempted it but with a view to oblige the Editor of *Ossian* to favour the
World.

World with a Translation of these three Passages, and to insert them in the next Edition in their proper place; not doubting but they will be equally elegant with the rest of his Performance.

As I may be wrong in the Motive which I assigned for his leaving these Passages out of the Book, this will give him an Opportunity of discovering the true one.

Whatever was his Motive, I am very sure, if he rejected them from any Doubt of their being genuine, he had the same Reason for renouncing the whole; that is, it is impossible that any Surmise of that kind should have been his Motive; and it is still less possible for him to have thrown them aside from any impure Ideas conveyed in these three descriptive Passages.

It is the peculiar Felicity of the Muse of *Offian*, which I don't remember to have been taken notice of by the Editor, that whenever he is forced to approach towards Indelicacy by the Nature of the Subject, he either wraps it in the chastest Expressions, or speaks in Terms utterly unintelligible to any Female that has been modestly brought up. How ridiculous would it be to pay any regard to the affected Nicety, and penetrating Squeamishness, of experienced Prudes and light Coquettes!

T H E E N D.

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THE END.